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barometric observations were valuable in themselves, still they could not be relied on as indicative of height unless simultaneous observations were made elsewhere by a standard instrument, by which errors due to the variation of atmospheric pressure could be eliminated.

MR. CRAWFURD said that it struck him that the tribes of Indians in the valley of the Amazons were much like herds of the lower animals. He believed that the reason of the paucity of population in that immense plain was the enormous quantity of timber which grew there. A country covered with forests was always deficient in useful plants capable of cultivation and in animals amenable to domestication. The fertile valley which had been spoken of might be very valuable some day, but the Spaniards and Portuguese had been in occupation of it for upwards of 300 years and made nothing of it. He wished to be informed by Mr. Chandless whether the different tribes of natives whom he met spoke the same language, or whether their languages were different and founded on the American principle of agglutination. He wished also to know what animals were met with on the Purus.

MR. CHANDLESS replied that he had met eight tribes, speaking, he believed, as many different languages. As to the animals, he had seen the curassow-bird, the tapir, and the capivaras (or water-hog), the last of these being very common. Monkeys were to be found in the trees by the river-side, but he had met with scarcely any animals on his land journey through the forest, the noise of cutting the path through the timber having probably frightened them away.

To an inquiry from Dr. WEBSTER as to whether india-rubber-trees were numerous in the forest, Mr. Chandless replied that they were numerous far up the Purus. Those who were accustomed to prepare india-rubber said that it was of good quality.

*Eighth Meeting, 11th March, 1867.*

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HENRY C. RAWLINSON, K.C.B., M.P., VICE-PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*Pearson Morrison, Esq.; Richard Baxter, Esq.; Edward Thornton, Esq., C.B.; Frederick Berridge, Esq.*

ELECTIONS.—*H. L. Anderson, Esq.* (late Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government); *C. F. Collier, Esq.; Colonel Richard Crewe; William Leighton Jordan, Esq.; William Martin, Esq.; Pearson Morrison, Esq.; James O'Brien, Esq.; Francis Beaufort William Quin, Esq.; William Rossiter, Esq.; Colonel J. C. Salkeld* (H.M.'s Indian Forces); *Charles William Shepherd, Esq., M.A., F.Z.S.; Edwin Story, Esq., M.A., St. John's College, Cambridge.*

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY SINCE THE LAST MEETING.—'Elementary Treatise on Quartz and Opal,' by George Trail, F.R.G.S. Presented by the Author. 'Polynesia: a Popular Description of the Physical Features, Inhabitants, Natural History, and Productions of the Islands of the Pacific; with an Account of their Discovery and

the Progress of Civilization and Christianity amongst them,' by G. F. Angas, F.L.S. Also, 'Australia: a Popular Account of its Physical Features,' &c. Presented by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 'Viaggio di Cinque Anni in Asia, Africa et Europe del Turco, di Gio Battista de Burgo, 1687.' Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq., F.R.G.S. 'Greenland—Eskimo Vocabulary for the use of Arctic Expeditions, 1853.' 'Eskimaux and English Vocabulary, for the use of Arctic Expeditions, 1850.' Presented by Capt. G. H. Richards, R.N., Hydrographer to the Admiralty. 'Beiträge zur Geologischen in Kaukasischen Ländern, von H. Abich.' With a map. Tiflis, 1865. Presented by the Author, H. Abich. 'Kertsch und Taman-Karten der Halbinseln Kertsch und Taman;' 'Aperçu Voyages en Transcaucasie en 1864;' 'La Geologie du Daghestan, 1862,' donations from the Academ. Scien. de St. Petersburg. 'An Elementary Physical Atlas, intended chiefly for Map-drawing and for the study of the great physical features and relief contours of the Continents; with an Introduction to serve as a guide for both purposes,' by the Rev. J. P. Faunthorpe, B.A., F.R.G.S. 'La Politique du Bresil, ou la Fermeture des Fleuves sous pretexte de l'ouverture de l'Amazone.' Avec une carte colorie. 'Recherches Hydrographiques de la Mer Caspienne, refermant la partie Astronomique de ces investigations.' St. Petersburg. From Vice-Admiral Tilenoy. 'Funf Jaren in Japan,' from 1863 to 1867. By J. W. J. L. C. Pompe van Meerdervoort. Purchased. 'Ueber Colonization in Ost Africa,' von Otto Kersten. Wien, 1867. Purchased.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM SINCE THE LAST MEETING.—A Chinese Map of China, on 64 sheets. A Chinese Map of the Province of Shan-si; showing part of the Great Wall, and of the Hoang-ho or Yellow River. Presented by Dr. J. Lamprey.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Meeting that the President was unavoidably absent through indisposition; but he had forwarded to him, to be read that evening, a statement relative to the reported death of Dr. Livingstone. He (the Chairman) would first read the letter of Dr. Kirk to Mr. Bates, the Assistant-Secretary, which had been published in the 'Times,' and afterwards the communication of the President.

"MY DEAR BATES,

"Zanzibar, Dec. 26, 1866.

"I have written fully to Sir Roderick three weeks ago, *via* the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena, again *via* Mauritius and Suez, with all information we yet have got regarding poor Livingstone.

"As I am going to Kilwa and Mikindany for a few days, to see if anything is there known of the sad story,—and to seek for any letters which may have been sent by Dr. Livingstone, before crossing Lake Nyassa,—I write a note to you, that may go by any ship passing here while I am absent. On the 5th of

December, nine Johanna men of the party which accompanied Dr. Livingstone came to Zanzibar, reporting that on the west of Nyassa, some time between the end of July and September, they were suddenly attacked by a band of Mavite, and that Dr. Livingstone with half his party were murdered. Those who returned escaped, as they say, through being behind and unseen, and they all depose to having helped to bury the dead body of their leader the same evening. Although in the details and in other things the accounts of the various men differ, they all agree that they saw the body, and that it had one wound—that of an axe—on the back of the neck. One man saw the fatal blow given.

“The attack was sudden, and Dr. Livingstone had time to overpower those who faced him, and was struggling to reload when cut down from behind. I fear the story is true, and that we shall never know more of its details. Full statements have gone home, but this may reach Aden by an American vessel during my absence.

“You will see, if this arrives first, that we have sad news for the Society on the way.

“J. KIRK.”

The despatches and letters alluded to by Dr. Kirk had not yet arrived, and were not expected for a fortnight. The following were remarks on Dr. Kirk's statement communicated by Sir Roderick :—

“11th May, 1867.

“Regretting particularly that, owing to indisposition, I am unable to attend the Meeting this day, I beg the Fellows of the Society to recollect that, in announcing the reported death of my dear and valued friend Dr. Livingstone, I spoke of it as an event which required to be substantiated by better evidence than that of the nine men of Johanna in the Comoro Islands, who brought the sad intelligence.

“I am informed by travellers who know these people well, that they are Mahommedans who, if they became disgusted with or intimidated by the ferocious Pagan natives on the borders of the Lake Nyassa, might have abandoned their chief; and, having agreed upon the story they were to tell, would hold together firmly in maintaining its truth.

“There are also several parts of their narrative which seem to me to be difficult to understand. Their being hidden in a wood, and yet their observation of the attack on Livingstone being so accurately described.

“Again, if, as the Johanna men state, they buried their leader, is it likely that they would in such case not have brought away with them some relic to vouch for the truth of their story? Presuming that if hostile natives had killed Livingstone, they would have cared little for his note-books, one of them alone, or even a lock of his hair, would have been good auxiliary evidence.

“Further, when I recollect that many an African traveller who has returned safely to England has been reported to have been killed (usually by runaway natives who had deserted him), I shall not abandon all hope until Dr. Kirk, the former devoted companion of Livingstone, and who has gone towards the scene of the alleged disaster, shall have satisfied himself that the calamity really occurred, and that Philanthropists and Geographers have lost the great traveller who had already won for himself imperishable renown.

“I have only to add that the more detailed account which Dr. Kirk had sent to me, before the letter which appeared in the ‘Times’ was written, will, I apprehend, throw little new light upon the alleged murder, as it can be nothing more than a detailed account of the story as related by the Johanna men. The search into the truthfulness or otherwise of the account received must occupy some time.

“RODERICK I. MURCHISON.”

He (the Chairman) agreed with Sir Roderick Murchison in all his observations. The story told by the men was a very lame one as it stood at present, and ought not to be accepted without verification. At the same time, it was ominous that it was now eight or nine months since the assassination was said to have taken place, and no despatch had been received contradicting it. In the mean time, all that could be done was, to have patience and await the result. He (the Chairman) was sure that they would all feel that, if Dr. Livingstone had perished, not only had science sustained an irreparable loss, but that almost every Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society had lost a personal friend.

The following Papers were read :—

1. *The Delta and Mouths of the Amu Daria, or Oxus.* By Admiral A. BOUTAKOFF.

THE paper gave an account of the exploration which the author undertook of the mouths of the Oxus in two expeditions, the first in 1848-9, and the second in 1858-9. The river first begins to bifurcate in lat.  $42^{\circ} 12'$  and long.  $60^{\circ} 15'$  E. of Greenwich. This is the head of the Delta, the central portion of which forms a sort of depression into which the waters of all the branches, excepting the westernmost (the Laudan), empty themselves in a series of lakes more or less overgrown with reeds. The mouth of the Laudan has a depth of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot only across the bar. The eastern arm, which limits the Delta, is called the Kuvan-Djarma, or Kuk (Blue) River, and, towards the sea, the Yangy Su (New River). In 1848-9 the principal mass of the waters of the Oxus was discharged through this branch, so that at  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the mouth the expeditionary party drew fresh water from over the side of the vessel. In 1859, on the contrary, the Aral was quite salt close up to the mouth of the Yangy Su. The author, in September, 1859, ascended this channel, and at  $22\frac{3}{4}$  miles found the navigation arrested by a rocky ridge extending right across its bed, over which the water was only from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet. He was compelled, in consequence, to leave behind his principal vessel, a steamer of 40-horse power, and to continue the survey in an open steamer of 12-horse power, with a crew of 18 men. The breadth of the channel further up was from 50 to 80 fathoms, and the depth 5, 6, 7, and 8 feet. After throwing off this easterly arm, the Amu Daria flows to the N.W. and N., continually emitting small branches and one larger channel, the Karabaili, which spreads out over the depressions, out of which it afterwards runs off into the one common channel of the Ulkun Daria (Great River) the branch by which the greatest quantity of water now finds its way to the Aral. West of the Ulkun is the Taldyk mouth, which had, in 1848-9, a very rapid current, with a depth of 3 feet on the bar, but which had lessened to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot in 1858. The fortified town of Kungraad,